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ABSTRACT

The clinical training program was designed to train minority Master's-level social work students to work with the chronically mentally ill. Specialized training centers were developed through collaborative relationships with three community-based agencies serving predominantly minority populations. The interagency relationships established for the program in turn resulted in enhanced linkages between ethnic communities and an enhanced curriculum. During the 3-year grant period, the 13 participating students received stipends and tuition awards while completing an educationally-focused field work placement at one of the participating agencies. Four part-time grant faculty with expertise in mental health services and services to ethnic minorities provided classroom instruction, supervised students in field placements, and participated in curriculum development. Field instructors, and social workers employed at participating agencies, were instrumental in developing and supervising the agency learning experience. (Author/MSE)

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PROJECT TITLE: Clinical Training Grant for the Development of Minority and Diadvantaged Studnts

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FUNDING AGENCY: National Institute of Mental Health
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AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory Project

The AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory is a two-year project seeking to establish and test a model system for collecting and disseminating information on model programs at AASCU-member institutions--375 of the public four-year colleges and universities in the United States.

The four objectives of the project are:

- To increase the information on model programs available to all institutions through the ERIC system
- To encourage the use of the ERIC system by AASCU institutions
- To improve AASCU's ability to know about, and share information on, activities at member institutions, and
- To test a model for collaboration with ERIC that other national organizations might adopt.

The AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory Project is funded with a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education to the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, in collaboration with the ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education at The George Washington University.

PROJECT ABSTRACT

A program in clinical training focused on the development of minority practitioners with expertise in services to the chronically mentally ill was proposed by the Department of Social Work, CSULB, and funded by the National Institue of Mental Health for a period of three years. The need for MSW's, particularly minority MSW's in mental health, as both direct practitioners and agency administrators and directors is evident from the demographic shifts and changes in the surrounding communities.

This clinical training program provided for the development of specializd trainig centers at community based agencies for MSW students in mental health. The participating agencies serve predominately minority populations, have a history of excellence in student training, and provided a rich training experience for students. Linkages and collaboration among the participating agencies and the Department of Social Work enhanced linkiages between ethnic minority communities and led to the development of excellent curriculum in areas of mental health practice and policy for students enrolled in the MSW program.

A total of 13 students participated during the grant period, receiving financial assistance in the form of stipends and tuition awards, while completing an educationally focused field work placement at one of the participating agencies. Four part time grant faculty, with special expertise in mental health services and services to ethnic minorities provided student supervision and collaboration in curriculum development.

INTRODUCTION

This paper presents a unique collaborative approach to the training of MSW students from ethnic minority background in areas of service to the chronically mentally ill population. This approach has been utilized by an MSW program in a large urban university, and specifically targets ethnic minority students and community based agencies representing both the public and private sector, serving the mental health needs of ethnic minority populations.

The model presents a plan for the development of collaborative relationships with community based agencies to develop centers of training in mental health, and includes a strong curriculum in mental health issues, and an educationally focused field work experience at one of the participating agencies. Curriculum development in the areas of ethnic sensitive social work practice is an additional focus of the project.

The program will produce professionals in the field of social work with special expertise and training in mental health issues, and treatment of minority groups and the disadvantaged. The program has relevance nationally to social work educators, social work practitioners, and to agency administrators who are confronting the realities of recruiting and retaining qualified individuals to serve the mental health needs of ethnic minorities.

BACKGROUND

STATEMENT OF NEED

The need for mental health professionals with specialized training and expertise, to provide relevant services to the chronically mentally ill population throughout the nation is clear. The increase in the numbers of individuals requiring mental health services has been significant over the past decade. The rapid growth of identified social problems, such as severe family dysfunciton, growing divorce rate and a high incidence of upper and middle income financial delinquincy has presented a major challenge to the mental health delivery system. The current care delivery system has been unable to meet the demand for increased services, both in quantity and quality. Lack of continuity of care, staffing cuts and fiscal constraints have complicated efforts to imrove the current system.

Racial/ethnic minorities are expected soon to be one-quarter of the U.S. population. The crisis in mental health services is further exacerbated by the increasing numbers of minority clients in need of mental health services, and an insufficient number of professionally trained bilingual and bicultural staff with ethnically sensitive practice skills.

At the local level, an increase in demographic shifts, and the increased incidence of social problems have contribut6ed to severe social breakdown, and a crisis in the provision of mental health services. Los Angeles and Orange counties have experienced major change in ethnic commposition during the past decade. The ethnic distribution in Los Angeles county is

currently 53% Anglo, 28% Hispanic, 13% Black, 6% Asian and 1% Native American. Over 2 million people have come from other countries since 1970 to settle in the Los Angeles basin, and Los Angeles is predicted to continue to be a growth center, and to become the largest city in the nation with 10 million people by year 2033.

Orange county currently has a population of 2 million, and has shown signficiant ethnic composition change in the last decade. As of the 1980 census, 14% of the population was non-white, compared to less than 3% non-white in 1970. Since the 1980 census, there has been a steady influx of refugees and immigrants from Mexico, South and Central America and the Southeast Asian countries. Both the Asian and Hispanic population in Orange county are over twice the national average.

Ethnic minorities are in a "triple jeopardy" situation, placing them at a higher level of risk for physical and mental illness, due to age, poverty and minority status. Because of racial and cultrual differences, minorities have long received differential treatment, thus setting them apart from the mainstream of society. They have had to cope with limitations in education, financial buying power, health and political participation. Underutilization of services is compounded when the ethnic minority does not have adequate social supports to bridge the linguistic and cultural gaps to communicate with formal health and mental health systems.

Despite the growth of the minority popullation, less than 10% of the mental health professionals are of racial/ethnic minority origins. The California Chapter of the National

Association of Social Workers recently completed a study of individuals employed in the mental health field. Results suggested that a disproportionately large number of minority staff working within the mental health system were unlicensed and with a lesser degree of professional training. While unlicensed mental health workers make up twenty percent of all treatment staff, this group accounts for twenty six percent of minority staff.

Therefore, more than a quarter of Spanish specaking staff are unlicensed mental health workers, and almost a third of Black staff are unlicensed mental health workers. This clearly demonstrates the need for professional education and specialized trainng opportunities for racial/ethnic minority and disadvantaged individuals, and identifies an available pool of staff already working in human services who could be upgraged through specialized education. Social Workers comprise a large portion of the work force in mental health agencies who could benefit from specialized training.

The Department of Social Work, CSULB, opened its MSw program in September 1985. The program is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education, and offers an advanced practice focus, with a specialization in the areas of "Children, Youth and Families" or "Aging and Families." It emphasizes services in public and private, non-profit agencies in the adjacent communities rather than private, individual clinical practice.

The program offers two innovative features which make it particularly congruent with the surrounding community. First, it

is designed to be responsive to the needs of working students, and offers a well-developed, part-time option. This option of the program has allowed a large number of individuals already employed in public agency practice to access the MSW degree, thereby increasing their knowledge and skill base, and the quality of their practice. A second innovaative feature of the program is the emphasis on cultural awareness and participation with diverse cultural ethnic groups. The overall mission of this graduate MSW program is to provide exposure to, knowledge of, and experience with ethnic diversity. Students who complete the program will have skill in ethnic sensitive practice, and will enhance the quality of social work serivces provided in community agencies through their leadership skills and high quality practice standards.

Current enrollment in the MSW program includes 332 students, withn an ethnic breakdown of 61% Anglo, 14% Hispanic,k 10% Black, 6% Asian American, 3% Native American Indian, and 6% who declined to state ethnicity. This graduate program has the largest number of ethnic minority students of any graduate social work program in the U.S., with the exception of Howard University, Fordham University, and the University of Puerto Rico. The faculty of the Department of Social Work reflect a diversity of cultural/ethnic backgrounds, and have rich connections to Black, Asian and Hispanic populations.

In response to the demographic characteristics of the surrounding communities, and the demonstrated manpower needs, the Department of Social Work, CSULB, proposed and received funding to develop a comprehensive training program, targetting minority

and disadvantaged students. A curriculum including theoretical coursework and an educationally focused field work experience provided specialized training to social work students of racial/ethnic minority and disadvantaged populations, to provide culturally sensitive and relevant mental health services to the diverse client population in the local communities. Additionally, community agencies providing mental health services to primarily ethnic communities were selected to become specialized training sites for MSW students participating in the project. The agency sites were selected for development as specialized centers because of the full range of serivces they offer, and for their emphasis on outreach and development of culturally sensitive and responsive treatment services in their local communities.

COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS AND COMMITMENT TO THE PROJECT

A unique feature of this project is the strong focus on collaboration among the participating agencies with the university. This project builds upon a strong foundation and history of collaborative and innovative programming established by Department of Social Work, CSULB and the participating agencies. The project was integrated into the total graduate program at the Department of Social Work, and facilities and resources of CSULB were made available to the project.

DESCRIPTION

PROJECT FOCUS AND SCOPE

This project encourages collaborative efforts between CSULB Department of Social Work and a variety of agencies in the local communities in the development of a training program to produce minority practitioners with expertise in services to the chronically mentally ill, with a particular focus on ethnic minority client populations.

The training program includes a didactic component with a strong curriculum in mental health issues, both from a direct practice/intervention focus, and a planning/administration focus, and an experiential component, providing educationally based field work experiences for 13 students at participating agencies.

PROJECT GOALS

1. Develop a strong curriculum in social work and mental health reflecting cultural relevance and state of the art techniques and methods;

2. Attract working students, particularly minority students to the field of social work and mental health by providing a part-time option of course work and field work in mental health;

3. Develop community based agencies as specialized training centers for field work placement of MSW students in mental health;

4. Upgrade skills and credentials of social service workers already working in mental health by providing a part-t9me option of course work and field work for working students at

their place of employment;

5. Provide an integrated and educationally based field work experience for participating students;

6. Provide individualized education by tailoring field work to each students learning goals; and

7. Develop a labor pool of professionals in the field of social work with special expertise and trainig around the mental health of minority groups and the disadvantaged.

STAFFING - PERSONNEL AND QUALIFICATIONS

1. Dr. James Kelly, Professor and Director, Department of Social Work assumed the overall responsibility for the operation of the project. Dr. Kelly has extensive experience in the administration of grants, and has been awarded numerous training grants from the Administration on Aging, the Childrens Bureau and the California STate Department of Mental Health.

2. Ms. Janet Black, LCSW, Professor and Director of Field Education is the Project Co-Director and Principal Investigator. Ms. Black is responsible for the development of the field work curriculum and all related policies, and managed the operationalization of all aspects of this project, including the selection of placement agencies, selection of stipended students, submission of all required reports and financial affairs of the project.

3. A variety of grant funded faculty were involved in this project during its three year duration. These part-time Department of Social Work faculty members provided classroom instruction in relevant courses, and/or supervised students in field placements and/or functioned as faculty liaison/field

seminar instructors for participating students. Grant funded faculty members were selected on the basis of their expertise in issues of mental health services to ethnic minority individuals, and their involvement in curriculum development within the Department of Social Work. All faculty were involved in review and subsequent development of curriculoum content, including content units or modules, and/or training materials and tools to enhance the students learning experience both in the field work setting and in the academic setting. Integration of classroom and field work learning was a primary focus of the project.

4. Field Instructors play an integral role in the trainig and mentoring of the participating students. All field instructors were MSW/LCSW social workers employed at one of the participating sites. Special efforts were made to identify field instructors from ethnic minority groups and participant agencies serving ethnic minority individuals.

TARGET POPULATION OF THE PROJECT

This project targetted students representing ethnic minority backgrounds placed in community based agencies in both the private and public sector, that focused on providing mental health services to surrounding ethnic minority communities.

OPERATIONALIZATION OF THE PROEJCT

EXPERIENTIAL COMPONENT - FIELD WORK PLACEMENT

A total of 13 students were funded under this project during the three years of its operation. These students were placed at one of three participating agencies for one academic year field work placement during the course of the project.

Each student completed a 500 hour field work placement at one of the participating agencies, spending 16 hours per week in the field work placement and concurrently taking an academic courseload. Students represented both first and second year level students, and both the "Children, Youth and Families" and the "Older Adults and Families" concentration of study. The focus of the field work placement was on direct service provision, assisting the student in learning the full range of social work skills. All students were exposed to the mental health needs of clients, regardless of the nature of the setting in which the services were provided.

Students selected to receive funds under this project met all regular CSULB admission requriements for graduate study, as well as the Department of Social Work criteria for admission to the program. They were all full-time students at the point of funding. Students were required to maintain a 3.0 GPA during the course of their funded field placement.

An individual field instructor was designated for each student. The field instructor was an MSW/LCSW with at least 2 years of post MSW experience, who met all criteria of the university, and who was employed by the agency in which the student was placed.

The field instructor played an instrumental role in developing and supervising the learning experience for the student, and assiting the student in developing a formalized learning contract. Students received a minimum of 1 hour/week individual supervision from the field instructor, in addition to a variety of other supervision and training opportunities.

Students additionally participated ina field work seminar meeting 1 and 1/2 hours per week at the university. The field seminar provided an opport nity for students to examine and understand their professional roles and the integration of personal and professional values, and provided a forum for the integration of theoretical and practice applications. The seminar was taught by a member of the Department of Social Work faculty. This faculty member also served as the agency liaison. In this capacity, they visited the student and field instructor in the field work placement setting once each semester, to review student progress, and to further enhance the integration of field work and classroom curriculum.

Participating field work agencies included:

1. King-Drew Medical Center - A 500 bed Los Angeles County Department of Health Services facility. The staff and patient pop-ulation are ethnically mixed, with a large percentage of elderly clients. This facility provides mental health and health services on an inpatient basis for a large numbr of indigent clinets of many cultural backgrounds. The medical center is adjacent to the Augustus Hawkins Mental Health Center and Drew Medical School. It provides a full range of medical specialities as well as mental health units.

2. El Centro Community Mental Health Center - A private, non-profit community mental health center that serves the greater East Los Angeles area. It is a contract agency with Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health. Services at El Centro are designed to be culturally relevant to both bilingual and

monolingual Latino populations. The clinic has programs targetted for elderly clients as well as children and family oriented treatment programs.

3. Orange County Health Care Agency/Mental Health Department - This agency serves the small, but geographically and ethnically complex county, and has an overall purpose of identifying, evaluating and treating mental and behavioral disorders, emotional problems and drug abuse. The Health Care Agency is regionalized and provides services to a culturally diverse clientele. Particularly significant are the large concentrations of Hispanic individuals in the East region and the large concentraiton of Indochinese indivdiuals in the West region.

DIDACTIC COMPONENT

The MSW curriculum includes foundation courses in cross-cultural social work practice, human behavior and the social environment, social work policy, computers and social serivces, and research methods within the first year of study. All other courses are focused within the specialization (Children, Youth and Families or Aging and Families), providing the maximum of advanced specialized education. The practice sequence covers micro to macro systems, with a focus on the mental health delivery system for each population focused concentration, as well as a course in administration and program development. Courses of particular relevance to this clinical training program include:

SW 500 - Foundations of Generic Social Work Practice: A Cross-Cultural Perspective - An introduction to the assumptions, concepts, principles and values of generic social work practice form a cross-cultural perspective. The course considers professional relationships, social work roles, practice processes and strategies of action and analysis of service delivery models appropriate for use in working with ethnic minority indivduals, groups, organizations and commuinities.

SW 560/1 - Direct Intervention with Individuals: Focus on Children,Youth,Families or Aging and Families - An advanced specialist overview of the conceptual and practice modalities of mental health social work for each specialization area. A biopsychosocial perspective which views children and older adults in their cultural context will be presented to illustrate the ways in which individuals are influenced by psychologial processes, family interaction, socio-political, socio-cultural and environmental experiences.

SW 660/1 - Direct Intervention with Groups and Families: Focus on Children,Youth, Families or Aging and Families - Focus on work with children and/or older adults within the context of their familiy as well as larger social systems. The course examines the psychological, gender, social, environmental and cultural issues that most commonly arise for children and/or older adults and explores the most effective kinds of assessment and interventions to deal with these issues within the mental health framework.

SW 670/1 - Adminstration for Health and Mental Health - Focus on Children, Youth, Families or Aging and Families - Baic processes of management in human service agencies with emphasis on mental health and health service delivery systems. Course will provide a framework for planning, monitoring and information management, and provide a foundation for effective organizational participation and leadership.

SW 681/2 - Policy, Professional Issues and the Future of Social Work - Designed to explore the key issues, needs and developments associated with emerging social policies and programs related to mental health that impact contemporary American society, and to prepare students to participate and contribute as social work professionals in the changing envrionment of social policy and the evolving nature of the profession.

SW 562 - Social Work and Mental Health - The changing role of social work in mental health settings, influence of new psycho-social and psychiatgric theories upon the care and treatment of the severely and chronically mentally ill. Focus on social, economic and cultural factors as they affect social work roles in clinical practice.

PROGRAM COSTS

The grant was funded for a three year period, with a total of $138,564 in federal funds. The majority of these dollars were utilized to support participating students in the form of clincial training stipends and tuition awards. A total of 13 students were supported, totaling $76,000. The remaining federal dollars supported grant faculty who were invovled in classroom teaching assignments of related mental health/social work practice courses, and/or field liaison with the participating agencies.

The Department of Social Work provided in-kind support for this grant through the Project Coordinator/Principal Investigators time and administrative expertise, supplies, specialized training seminars for community based field instructors, and development of curriculum materials.

RESULTS

A total of 13 students received funding under this project during its three year duration. Placement sites and ethnic representation of students was as follows:

Agency Placement Site	Student Ethnicity		
	Black	Hispanic	Asian
King Drew Medical Center	5		
El Centro Mental Health Ctr		5	2
Orange County Mental Health	1		

Evaluation of the goals and objectives of the grant are as follows:

1. Develop a strong curriculum in social work and mental health reflecting cultural relevance and state of the art techniques and methods.

This goal was evaluated by a review of the course content by students, field instructors and faculty teaching the the practice and mental health areas. During the course of the project, the course outlines were revised to reflect feedback received from the evaluation process. The cross-cultural content was strengthened throughout the curriculum, as was the focus on the range of mental health practice interventions.

2. Attract working students, particularly minority students into the field of social work and mental health.

This goal was evaluated by a review of administrative data during the three year project period. Throughout the project period, the number of ethnic minority students remained in the

35-40% range of the total MSW student population. 80% of these students were enrolled in the part-time model of the MSW program. Clearly the implementation of this model has allowed students to access the MSW degree while continuing to maintain their employment. The majority of these students would not have been able to complete the degree if the program were not in place.

3. Develop three community based agencies as specialized training centers for MSW students.

During the course of the project, all three agencies identified in the original grant application were utilized for the placement of MSW students. King-Drew Medical Center and El Centro Commuity Mental Health Center were used consistently throughout the project period, with Orange County Mental Health being utilized only in year 3 of the program. A review was conducted of all three agencies "training curriculum" for social work students during the project period. A systhesis of various teaching and training resources utilized by these agencies is being compiled for distribution among all field instructors.

4. Upgrade skills and credentials of social service workers already working in mental health.

This goal was evaluated by a review of the number of part-time students who were able to maintain their employment in a social serivce related agency and participate in the MSW program. A total of 91 students completed an agency of employement placement during the first two years of the project. Figures for the third year are currently being compiled and will be combined with the earlier data, and analyzed to identify trends

in agency support for these students, effectiveness of agency of employment placements, and the agency's subsequent commitment to upgrade positions or relocate employees after completing the MSW degree.

5. Provide integrated field-work-classroom education, and

6. Provide individualized education.

These two goals were evaluated by a review of the student evaluations of field placements and classroom curriculum content, a review of student performance in field work as prepared by the individual student's field instructor, and a review of the learning contracts prepared by each student which indivdiualized the field work placement to their learning needs and interests. These evaluation processes are still underway.

7. Develop a labor pool of professionals in the field of social work with expertise in mental health.

Of the 13 students funded under this grant, 10 have graduated from the MSW program with their degree. A questionnaire/evaluation study has been sent to each of these students to ascertain their current employment site, their ongoing commitment to mental health services, and their commitment to working with ethnic minority populations.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Clinical Training Grant for the Development of Minority and Disadvantaged Students funded by the National Institute of Mental Health was a successful venture. It provided students from ethnic minority background the opportunity to access the MSW degree by means of stipended support for an educationally focused field work placement. It additionally provided support for faculty in the Department of Social Work to develop a superior curriculum in areas of culturally/ethnically sensitive social work practice in services to the chronically mentally ill populations in our surrounding communities.

Experience and knowledge gained through this project will be disseminated in a vareity of ways, including the preparation of several products, sharing of information with other Schools of Social Work and agencies serving the mental health needs of ethic minority populations, and through attendance and paper presentations at numerous local and national meetings.

The development of curriculum content relating specifically to the development of skills in ethnic sensitive practice and expertise in working with the mentally ill will provide helpful information and needed resource materials to other Schools of Social Work. Specific trainng materials and teaching tools related to these focus areas identified during the project period will be made available to interested educational institutions and community based agencies upon request.